

Remarks

The Examiner rejected claims 1–4 and 6–10, objected to claim 5, and allowed claims 11–16, 19–39, and 42–44. Claims 17, 18, 40, and 41 were previously canceled, and claims 11 and 32 were previously amended. In this response, claims 1, 3, 19, and 20 have been amended, and claims 2 and 4–9 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 10–16, 19–39, and 42–44 remain in the application.

The Examiner objected to the disclosure because claims 19 and 20 depended from canceled claim 17. Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to change their dependency to claim 11.

The Examiner rejected: (i) claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lapeyre et al. (US 5,507,383); (ii) claim 2 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lapeyre et al. in view of Kasai et al. (US 6,068,112); and (iii) claims 8 and 9 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lapeyre et al. in view of Guldenfels (US 6,382,404). The Examiner objected to claim 5 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claim 1 has been rewritten to include the limitation of objected-to claim 5. Because the limitations of intervening claim 4 are inherent in original claim 5, the specific language of claim 4 is not included in the amendment to avoid superfluity. Claims 2 and 4–9 have been canceled. Claim 3 has been amended to comport with and to depend from allowed claim 32. These amendments put the remaining claims in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

This amendment is being sent within two months of the Final Office Action. No extension of time petition fee should be due. Authorization to charge any other fees deemed

necessary for consideration of this response to Deposit Account No. 12-0090 is hereby given. If the Examiner thinks a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela L. Marshall et al.

Date: May 3, 2006

By:/jtc/
James T. Cronvich
Reg. No. 33163
Laitram, L.L.C.
220 Laitram Lane
Harahan, LA 70123
Telephone: (504) 570-1243
Fax: (504) 734-5233